

FACT SHEET – ~~INTERNAL ONLY~~

Environmental Stewardship Initiatives for
PF225 Fence Construction along the Southwest Border
U.S. Border Patrol San Diego Sector
August 2010



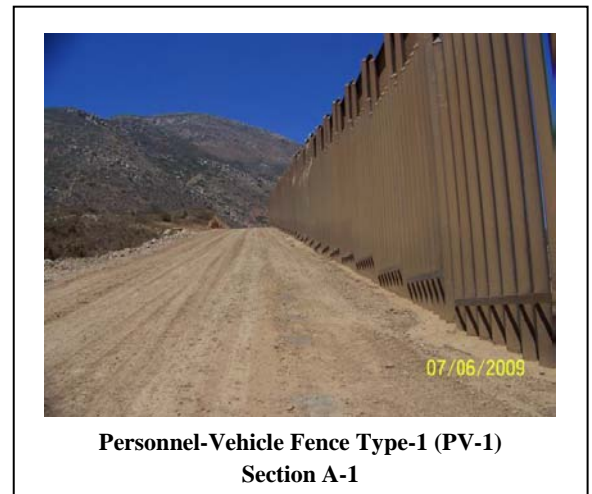
U.S. Customs and
Border Protection

The following is a summary of the environmental stewardship initiatives undertaken by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) during the planning, construction, and post-construction stages associated with installing tactical infrastructure (TI) along the U.S./Mexico International Border in the U.S. Border Patrol (USBP) San Diego Sector for TI sections "A-1" and "A-2." TI is a term used by the USBP to describe the physical structures that facilitate enforcement activities. These items typically include, but are not limited to, roads, vehicle and pedestrian fences, lights, gates, and boat ramps. TI constructed under CBP's Secure Border Initiative (SBI) Pedestrian Fence 225 (PF225) Program within the San Diego Sector consisted of pedestrian fence and construction/maintenance roads along the U.S./Mexico International Border in San Diego County, California. Temporary construction staging areas and access roads were also required to build the TI. This Fact Sheet provides the environmental impacts anticipated during pre-construction planning and those actually encountered during and following construction. In addition, it describes stakeholder outreach efforts that were carried out during all phases of the project, contributing partners, and any continuing issues.

On April 1, 2008, the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), pursuant to Section 102(c) of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) of 1996, as amended, exercised the waiver authority and waived certain environmental and other laws in order to ensure the expeditious construction of TI along the U.S./Mexico International Border. The TI described in this Fact Sheet is covered by the Secretary's April 1, 2008, waiver. Although the Secretary's waiver means that CBP no longer has any specific legal obligations under the laws that are included in the waiver, the Secretary has committed DHS to responsible environmental stewardship of our valuable natural and cultural resources. CBP strongly supports the Secretary's commitment to responsible environmental stewardship. To that end, CBP prepared a pre-construction Environmental Stewardship Plan (ESP), which analyzed the potential environmental impacts associated with construction of TI. Following construction, CBP prepared an Environmental Stewardship Summary Report (ESSR), which compared the final completed action to the original planned for installation of TI.

The following is a summary of CBP's environmental stewardship efforts.

- CBP carried out environmental stewardship efforts before, during, and after construction.
- Environmental impacts that resulted from this project were both positive and negative.
- Best Management Practices (BMPs) were developed and carried out to minimize negative environmental impacts.
- Stakeholder public outreach was conducted during all phases of the project.
- CBP participated in interagency and intergovernmental coordination activities to help minimize potential environmental impacts and streamline environmental processes. Some of the input resulted in changes to the project, such as the locations of construction access roads and the actual fence design.



After construction of the TI in the USBP San Diego Sector, the following were determined:

- No impacts on cultural resources occurred.
- Wetland area impacts increased in size; however, not by more than the approximately 4.8 acres anticipated prior to construction.

- Approximately 291.8 acres of soil were disturbed, which was a reduction of 54.8 acres from the amount of soil anticipated to be disturbed prior to construction.
- There were three federally listed animal species and two critical habitats of federally listed animals that were adversely impacted. There were no impacts to federally listed plant species or critical habitats of federally listed plants. The actual impacts to federally listed species and critical habitats were considerably lower than what was anticipated prior to construction.

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP COMPONENTS

CBP carried out environmental stewardship initiatives during all phases of the project – before, during, and after construction. Each component is discussed in the following paragraphs.

PRE-CONSTRUCTION

Environmental Stewardship Plans – In 2008, prior to construction, CBP developed three ESPs for the U.S. Border Patrol San Diego Sector.

- June 2008 – *Final Environmental Stewardship Plan Construction, Operation And Maintenance Of Airport Mesa Road And Fence U.S. Border Patrol San Diego County, California (A-2M)*
- July 2008 – *Final Environmental Stewardship Plan For The Construction, Operation, And Maintenance Of Tactical Infrastructure U.S. Border Patrol, San Diego Sector, El Cajon, Campo, And Boulevard Stations, California (A-2B – A-2L and A-2N)*
- October 2008 – *Final Environmental Stewardship Plan For The Construction, Operation, And Maintenance Of Tactical Infrastructure U.S. Border Patrol San Diego Sector, California (A-1 and A-2A)*

These three ESPs discuss the unique biological, geographical, and environmental conditions of various portions of the USBP San Diego Sector and include BMPs designed to reduce and offset potential environmental impacts. The ESPs remain available to the public and are posted online at http://cbp.gov/xp/cgov/border_security/ti/ti_docs/.

Biological Resources Field Surveys and Plans – CBP carried out pre-construction surveys to identify vegetation and wildlife within the area of the proposed fence and construction/maintenance road corridor, construction staging areas, and construction access roads. Subsequently, a BRP was developed in coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to summarize findings and incorporate them into the ESPs.

- August 2008 – *Biological Resources Plan For Construction, Operation, And Maintenance Of Tactical Infrastructure For San Diego Sector, California (Brown Field Station and Chula Vista Station)*

Special attention was paid to identifying federally listed species and critical habitats of federally listed species within the project area.

Estimated Footprint – It was estimated prior to construction that approximately 346.6 acres of land would be disturbed from the installation of TI in the USBP San Diego Sector.

Examples of potential environmental impacts and the BMPs and mitigation measures used to minimize these impacts are listed in **Table 1**. Not all anticipated environmental impacts were adverse; in fact, some were positive. CBP predicted that the installation of TI would accomplish the following:

- Reduce the amount of smuggling and illegal immigration, which would have a beneficial effect on national security, socioeconomics, and land management operations.
- Reduce foot traffic and illegal grazing in sensitive habitats, which would result in beneficial impacts on threatened and endangered species and their habitats as well as substantially decrease the risk of wildfires.

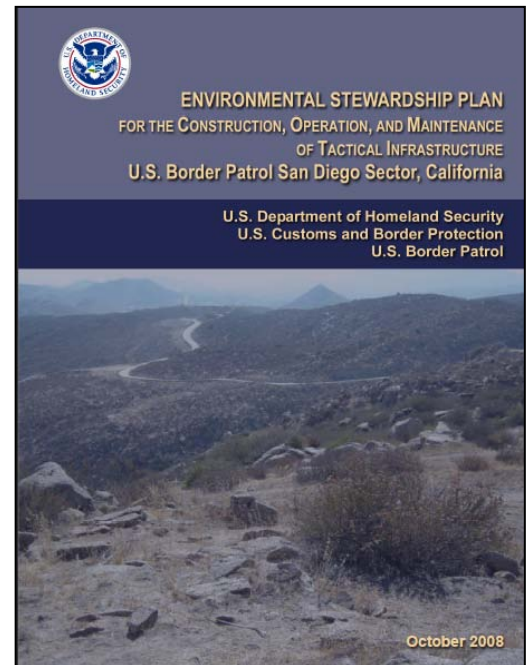


Table 1. Potential Environmental Impacts and BMPs/Mitigation Measures Identified Prior to Construction

Potential Environmental Impact (Cultural, Species, Wetlands)	BMPs and Mitigation Measures to Reduce or Eliminate the Potential Environmental Impact
Discovery of cultural resources in work area	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Halt construction until authorized to proceed by a qualified archaeologist who will consult with appropriate resource agencies• Place temporary fencing around International Boundary Monuments
Discovery of federally protected species in work area	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Halt construction until the environmental monitor can safely remove the protected species or it moves away on its own
Wildlife impacts due to construction, fencing, and habitat fragmentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Survey the area for migratory bird nests immediately prior to construction• Integrate small openings into fence design to allow small animals to pass through• Cap vertical bollards to prevent birds from falling inside• Cover open, steep-walled holes to prevent wildlife from falling in and becoming trapped
Introduction of invasive species	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wash equipment prior to use to minimize introduction of nonnative species• Remove only the minimum amount of vegetation• Revegetate project site with native species following construction
Change in size of wetlands and surface waters	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Halt construction during heavy rains• Design fence to allow for conveyance of water• Avoid stream crossings at channel bends when practical alternatives exist
Reduction of species habitat	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proposed purchasing of land within the habitat of the Quino checkerspot butterfly and California gnatcatcher and legally preserving this land from development• Entering into programmatic mitigation agreements to protect habitat

DURING CONSTRUCTION

CBP contracted independent environmental monitors (i.e., for biological and cultural resources) to be present during all construction activities. Their responsibilities included documenting adherence to the BMPs prescribed in the ESPs, identifying environmental impacts that occurred beyond those described in the ESPs, and ensuring that federally listed species and cultural resources were not impacted by the TI construction activities. CBP's environmental monitors worked approximately 9,890 man-hours during construction activities, which occurred from August 2008 to November 2009.

The environmental monitors reported that most BMPs prescribed in the ESPs were followed; see **Table 1** for examples of BMPs. However, some deviations did occasionally occur, including the following:

- Lack of flagging on some construction access roads
- Unnecessary widening of some existing roadbeds
- Occasional lack of erosion-control measures
- Some trash items scattered as litter
- Uncapped vertical bollards periodically left overnight
- Occasional open, steep-walled holes and trenches
- Occasional lack of drip pans underneath some stored vehicles



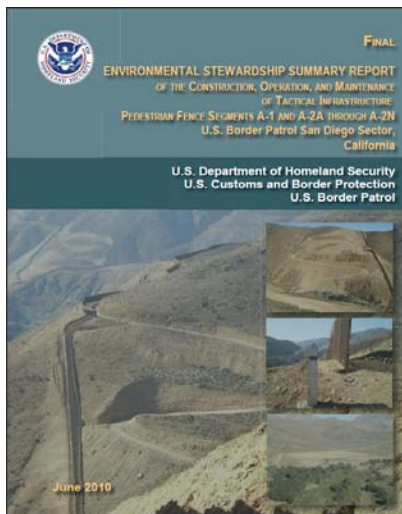
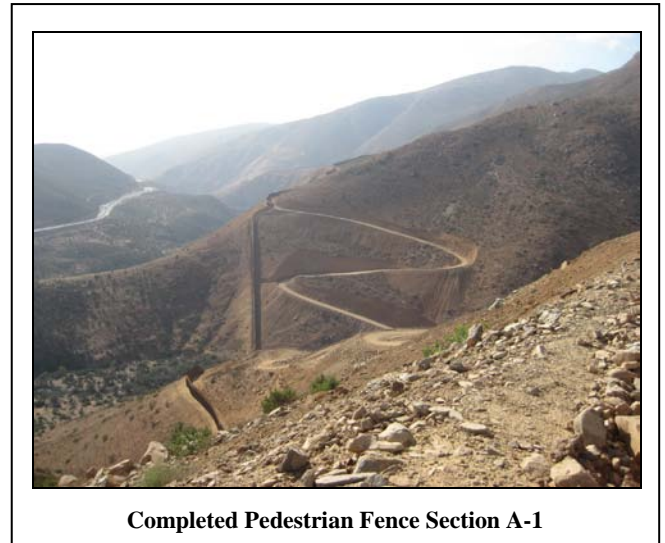
No significant impacts on environmental resources resulting from the BMP infractions were reported.

Unexpected field conditions during construction occasionally required practical changes to the plan for placement and design of the TI. In these situations, CBP conducted additional environmental surveys and analyses to determine the potential environmental impacts and the appropriate BMPs needed to support the changes. Most changes to the design and placement of the TI were minor and included slight refinements of fence type and footprint to meet operational requirements.

POST-CONSTRUCTION

Environmental Stewardship Summary Report – CBP conducted post-construction field surveys of biological and cultural resources and prepared a San Diego Sector level ESSR.

- June 2010 - *Final Environmental Stewardship Summary Report Of The Construction, Operation, And Maintenance of Tactical Infrastructure Pedestrian Fence Segments A-1 And A-2A Through A-2N U.S. Border Patrol San Diego Sector, California.*



The ESSR provided the following information:

- Identification of the final locations of TI and acreages of areas impacted
- An environmental baseline for future TI maintenance and repair efforts
- Documentation of the overall adherence and successes of the BMPs implemented during construction
- A record of the differences between the final locations and types of TI and those that were identified in the ESPs.

CBP's post-construction field surveys found that 291.8 acres of land were permanently disturbed from the installation of TI in the USBP San Diego Sector. **Table 2** summarizes the estimated pre-construction and actual post-construction ground disturbance totals in the San Diego Sector.

Table 2. Estimated Pre-Construction and Actual Post-Construction Ground Disturbance

Construction Activity	Estimated Disturbance in acres (linear miles)	Actual Disturbance in acres (linear miles)	Difference in acres (linear miles)
Fence and Construction/Maintenance Road Corridor	160.3 (14.6)	182.7 (13.9)	+22.4 (-0.7)
Construction Access Roads	140.1	78.6	-61.5
Construction Staging Areas	46.2	30.5	-15.7
Total Impacts	346.6	291.8	-54.8

The overall reduction in disturbed area from that anticipated prior to construction is attributed to a reduction in the number and size of construction access roads and staging areas ultimately needed. Approximately 45 percent of the area proposed as construction access roads and 30 percent of the area proposed as construction staging areas were not needed, and therefore, were not disturbed. The fence and construction/maintenance road corridor did, however, require more land than that anticipated during pre-construction planning. This increase in size results largely from construction crews requiring a wider project corridor because of the rugged terrain in section A-1.

Additionally, CBP's post-construction field surveys concluded the following:

- No impacts on cultural resources occurred.

- Impacts on wetland areas did occur. Wetland area impacts increased in size; however, not more than the approximately 4.8 acres anticipated in the ESPs.
- Approximately 291.8 acres of soil were disturbed, which was a reduction of 54.8 acres from the amount of soil anticipated to be disturbed prior to construction.
- There were three federally listed animal species and two critical habitats of federally listed animal species that were adversely impacted. There were no impacts to federally listed plant species or critical habitats of federally listed plants. **Table 3** shows that the actual impacts were considerably lower than what was expected prior to construction.

Table 3. Estimated Pre-Construction and Post-Construction Impacts on Federally Listed Species

Method for Species Count	Animals		Plants	
	Species	Critical Habitat	Species	Critical Habitat
Federally listed species and suitable habitat identified in the Biological Resources Plan	8	4	10	0
Federally listed species observed during pre-construction surveys ^a or construction monitoring ^b within the project area	5	3	1	0
Federally listed species and suitable habitat impacted by construction	3	2	0	0

Notes: ^a Based on the proposed project area

^b Based on surveys and monitoring of revised project areas

STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Throughout all phases of this project, CBP reached out to stakeholder organizations and regulatory agencies to incorporate their input as potential environmental impacts were identified, evaluated, and mitigated, as necessary. Outreach efforts included the following:

- **Open Houses** – The general public was invited to receive information and provide comments at open house events in Alpine, California, and at the San Diego Convention Center in San Diego, California, on January 16 and 17, 2008, respectively.
- **Incorporation of Comments** – CBP received and addressed hundreds of solicited and unsolicited comments from the following:
 - Federal, state, and municipal government agencies
 - Non-government organizations
 - Native American tribes
 - Stakeholder organizations
 - Private individuals.
- **Government Agency Coordination** – CBP directly coordinated with government agencies including the following:
 - U.S. Section, International Boundary and Water Commission
 - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
 - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 - U.S. Bureau of Land Management.

The information received from the outreach efforts resulted in numerous changes to the project, including the location of construction access roads, placement of construction staging areas, and design of fence components to minimize potential environmental impacts.

CONTRIBUTING PF225 PROGRAM PARTNERS

To accomplish the 2006 Congressional mandate for the DHS/CBP to construct approximately 700 miles of border fence along the U.S./Mexico International Border by the end of December 2008, DHS enlisted the assistance and expertise of interagency departments and other governmental agencies to provide management and subject matter experts for environmental stewardship, construction, real estate acquisitions, and contracting tasks. Contributing partners include the following:

- Office of Border Patrol
 - San Diego Sector
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
 - Fort Worth District
 - Los Angeles District.

CONTINUING ISSUES

CBP's post-construction surveys identified the following two continuing issues:

1. Soil erosion was present throughout some areas of the fence and construction/maintenance road corridor. Sand bags were installed along steep surfaces to channel runoff, but erosion remains a concern.
2. In some locations, such as temporary construction staging areas, natural vegetation had not taken hold as well as anticipated, putting these areas at increased risk for erosion and invasive species.

CBP remains committed to environmental stewardship and will continue to monitor these issues for potential additional actions.



Example of soil erosion-control measures



Hydro seeding at Construction Staging Area H of Section A-1



Hydro seeding at Construction Staging Area B of Section A-1